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## **Celebrating Our History**

### **Milestones in COMHAR's 40 Years**

#### **1963**

*President Kennedy proposes and signs legislation, The Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Mental Health Centers Construction Act, to develop in-community alternatives to custodial institutional care.*

#### **1965**

*The CMHC Amendments of 1965 provide funding in the form of staffing and construction grants to develop essential mental health services in poverty-stricken areas. The country is divided into 3000 catchment areas of 75,000 -200,000 individuals. Philadelphia County divides into 13 Catchment (Service) Areas.*

#### **1969**

First meeting, at The Lighthouse, to facilitate development of MH and MR services for the geographic area defined as Catchment Area 5B, encompassing Kensington and parts of eastern North Philadelphia, Port Richmond, Fishtown and Juniata Park.

#### **1970**

Meetings move to the cafeteria of Episcopal Hospital, and CA 5B plays “catch up” to other parts of the city where larger university-based hospitals had already applied for grants and begun services.

#### **1971**

Episcopal Hospital establishes a Base Service Unit, the State mandated first component of a Community Mental Health/Mental Retardation Center, to track clients in the community and in State institutions.

#### **1972**

Public elections held to form a community advisory board, as required by the Community mental Health Act, for the new program at Episcopal with the goal of making this program a free standing center.

#### **1974**

A new nonprofit corporation, named “Community Organization for Mental Health and Retardation”, CO-MHAR, Inc., is established in preparation for becoming a free-standing center.

#### **1975**

Episcopal Hospital receives small federal staffing grant that allows expansion from BSU-only status to a full status Community MH/MR Center. Emergency Services, Outpatient Counseling, Case Management, Partial Hospital, Consultation and Education, and Research and Evaluation are added.



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In July responsibility for the Community MH/MR Center is transferred to the COMHAR, Inc. community governing board and Episcopal becomes the second hospital in the city to divest.

**1976**

Day program/sheltered workshop established for individuals with mental retardation who lived at home with their families in the community.

**1977**

*Judge Broderick declares that individuals committed to State institutions have a "right to treatment."*

**1978**

First Community Residential Rehabilitation (CRR) programs for individuals with mental illness open for 9 women at 3138 Frankford Avenue and for 6 men at East Clearfield Street.

Day services expand for adults with mental retardation through Vocational Habilitation Program.

**1981**

First Community Living Arrangement (CLA) for 3 adults with mental retardation opens at 1760 Frankford Avenue.

**1984**

COMHAR receives its first grant from HUD (Housing and Urban Development) for subsidized rentals for individuals with mental illness and creates 10 apartments at 105-111 East Lehigh Avenue.

The Firewood Program, COMHAR's first Community Integrated Employment program, begins.

COMHAR responds to Philadelphia County RFP and is funded to establish its CORE Team.

COMHAR assumes responsibility for VHP/ADT services from the JFK MH/MR Center at 900 N. Broad Street.

**1985**

COMHAR's third HUD project establishes two in-community intensive care programs for individuals with more severe mental health symptoms.

**1986**

*Pennhurst State Center is closed.*

The Clubhouse, the first psychosocial rehabilitation program in the city based on the NYC Fountain House program, opens.



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Project PROACT, the prototype for the team intensive case management model, opens.

**1987**

*Closure of Philadelphia State Hospital announced.*

**1988**

*Concept of behavioral health Managed Care evolves from theory to practice.*

**1990**

*Ryan White Care Act passes.*

*Philadelphia State Hospital closes.*

**1991**

COMHAR submits proposal for Ryan White funds to provide city-wide services for individuals who are HIV+ and need mental health care. Proposal accepted and PACTS (Philadelphia AIDS Coordinated Therapy Services) opens.

**1992**

*Danny B. Decision begins down sizing of Woodhaven State Center, establishes consumers' right to choose where they receive services and leads to further expansion of community residential programs.*

**1992**

Supported Independent Living concept introduced in CRR program, and 18 individuals get the opportunity to select where they will live while maintaining needed supports.

**1995**

Home Health Care license obtained with the focus of providing physical health services for COMHAR's aging clients.

MR Seniors Program opens at the Vanderwoude Center at 3825 Whitaker Avenue.

Community Living Room established as a federal demonstration program to meet the mental health needs of individuals with HIV/AIDS uncomfortable in traditional clinic and hospital settings.

COMHAR secures Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) funds to establish housing opportunities for individuals with compromised immune systems and complex medical problems.

Groundbreaking for permanent Administrative Offices at 100 West Lehigh Avenue.



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**1996**

*First Mental Health Parity law passed.*

COMHAR establishes Children's Services as a separate division.

**1997**

*Embreeville deinstitutionalization begins, resulting in further expansion of in-community residential programs.*

**1998**

COMHAR opens its first LTSR, Independence House, at Oxford Avenue for 16 individuals leaving Norristown State Hospital.

COMHAR holds its first "Get to Know Us" Block Party.

Specialized bilingual/bicultural mental health services initiated for the Latino community.

**1999**

*Supreme Court issues Olmsted decision that it is a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act to keep individuals in restrictive inpatient settings when more appropriate community services are available.*

**2000**

Children's Services hosts its first Children's Holiday Party.

The PEW Charitable Trusts fund OATS program to provide outreach services to elderly Latinos in need of mental health services.

CLA program adds 3 programs for individuals being discharged from Ebensburg State Hospital and takes over 5 programs in Montgomery County.

COMHAR begins Health District Project to provide mental health assessment and treatment for low income elderly at four Philadelphia Health District locations, thus integrating their physical and mental health care.

Community Living Room receives national recognition for providing integrated mental health and HIV services.

**2001**

Strawberry Mansion Clinic opens to provide integrated mental health and physical health care for individuals affected by HIV/AIDS.



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COMHAR's MR Services partners with the Phillies to provide recreational, exercise and social opportunities for individuals with special needs through the medium of baseball.

COMHAR partners with Philadelphia Community College to offer on-site college courses to agency staff.

#### **2004**

COMHAR issues a \$4,500,000 bond to finance acquisition and rehabilitation/construction of facilities, refinance existing mortgages and upgrade technology.

#### **2005**

First Annual Golf Classic

Dorothy Anderson and Leadership Awards established to recognize and celebrate individuals and/or organizations for exceptional contributions to the individuals and communities COMHAR serves.

COMHAR opens specialized LTSR at 2201 E. York Street for aging individuals with serious health challenges being discharged from Norristown State Hospital.

New facility for Outpatient Services opens at 2055 E. Allegheny Avenue and the Open Door Clubhouse moves into newly renovated Emerald Street site.

#### **2007**

COMHAR begins Recovery Transformation of Day Programs for persons recovering from mental illness.

#### **2008**

*Mental Health Parity established.*

COMHAR partners with St. Christopher's Hospital and Center City Pediatrics, applies for and is awarded one of only eight national pilot projects for the screening, diagnosis and treatment of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

#### **2009**

The Beck Initiative begins at the Adult Outpatient Program, adding this evidence-based practice to COMHAR's array of services.

Administrative Office Building at 100 West Lehigh renamed in honor of COMHAR's long serving Board President, Dorothy Anderson.

#### **2011**

COMHAR opens two new residential programs in Northampton County for individuals being discharged from the closing of Allentown State Hospital.



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The Adult Outpatient Program redesigns service delivery adding the Welcome Center and same Day Access to services to provide immediate support for individualized needs. The Welcome Center Includes resources, peer support services and triage with therapy and psychiatry.

The COMHAR Intensive Case Management and Resource Coordination Services are re-organized to Blended Case Management to better meet system and person needs.

## **2012**

The Adult Outpatient Program is awarded a DBT training grant to provide dialectical behavioral therapy. This 24/7, evidence based practice further enhances the quality of care and outcomes of treatment.

Specialized HIV/Aids Services, our Strawberry Mansion Outpatient Program and the Latino Outpatient Treatment Program are redesigned to facilitate a walk-in day for same day access to services.

The Blended Case Management program adds a new Specialty Case Management team designated to service the needs of the Young Adult community.

## **2013**

The HOPE CIRC Program and the Adult Outpatient Program implement the Common Ground Initiative, an evidence-based practice to improve person-centered care, peer support and individual communication with doctors.

## **2014**

COMHAR's Children's Services program was awarded participation with the Thomas Scattergood Foundation for the *Building Agency Capacity in Program Evaluation Initiative*. The two year grant offers support from the expertise of staff from The Consultation Center of Yale University to learn practical program evaluation skills to identify and track program processes and outcomes.

COMHAR relocates our Latino Treatment Program and our Latino HOPE Program to new, expanded facilities with expanded services.

COMHAR relocates and expands Children's Services in the community, schools and recreation centers.

The Latino Treatment Program is awarded participation in the Trauma-focused CBT Treatment Program for children and families. Another evidence-based practice initiated to improve the quality and outcomes of service to our community.